

SUCCESS

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Newsletter for Lake County Workforce Development

Fall 2014

Lake County Workforce Development funds qualified job seekers for short-term training. The goal is to help trainees gain the up-to-date skills necessary to compete in the current market. Read on to learn how these trainees found their next career.

CNC Training Leads to Career Transition



Dale worked in the banking industry for several years. When he was recently laid off, he knew it was time for a change, but he did not know where to look. After researching options, he decided that the manufacturing industry would provide him with opportunities and growth potential. Staff from Lake County Workforce Development helped him apply for training under the ATIM* grant.

Dale started an accelerated 16-week training course at Symbol Training Institute in February 2014. He learned CNC operation, setup and programming. He also received industry recognized credentials from the National Institute of Metalworking Skills (NIMS) and a safety certificate.

Dale was hired by a Skokie manufacturer as a **CNC Machinist**, a few weeks prior to his graduation date in mid June. He said that he liked the flexible class scheduling and that his instructors took time to answer his questions and even checked on his progress after he began his job.

* As a part of the Advanced Training for Illinois Manufacturing (ATIM) program, the Metro Suburban Region received a \$2 million grant award to work with employers in developing workers for high demand manufacturing jobs.

During 2013 & 2014, Lake County Workforce Development sent **41** people to training in the areas of:

CNC set up and operation, robotics (mechatronics), and welding.

Training Services

Veteran Becomes a Truck Driver

James is a military veteran who went through a long time of unemployment that led to homelessness and health struggles. He faced job rejections, partially due to a criminal conviction from 28 years ago. Lake County Workforce Development was part of the team that helped him to rebuild his life. He also worked closely with the counseling programs of the Veteran's Administration.

James needed new skills to compete in today's job market.

Workforce Development funded him for training as a professional commercial truck driver at Kotra Driving School; he received his CDL license in May 2014 and quickly accepted a driving position in July 2014 that almost doubled his past annual income.

"Although times were rough, the WIA program provided hope during a very bleak time in my life and helped me to defeat those challenges and I am very optimistic going into the future."



Medical Training Provides New Opportunities



Beatriz landed a job as an **LPN** (licensed practical nurse) in August 2014. She already had over 10 years experience in the medical field but requested help from Workforce Development because she had trouble in finding the 'right' kind of work. She was certified as a nurse's aide in 2009 but knew she needed to set higher goals for herself. Workforce funded her for LPN training at J'Renee Career Facilitation, Inc. in 2013. She graduated in January 2014. She describes the Job Center as her 'oasis' and says that Workforce staff helped her understand the importance of setting goals. *"The Job Center took care of everything that I couldn't have imagined, in order to make it through one of the toughest periods in my life."*

IT Certification Validates Skills

Fabio requested training because his education had not kept up with his experience. He had worked as a Network Technician but his computer skills were all self-taught. Most recently, he provided computer support for a family-owned business, but he needed full time employment. Workforce Development funded him to complete a 9-month, IT (information technology) certification at New Horizon's Computer Learning Center. He was hired on a contractual basis as a Computer Support Specialist working for an employment agency in November 2013. He was hired as a **Field Network Technician** by one of the agency's business accounts in June 2014. He currently mentors other jobseekers who are transitioning into the IT field.



Business Services

After training, participants may be matched with a work experience that allows them to complete three months of paid experience with a local employer. Workforce Development staff members review the pool of trainees and interview appropriate candidates.

Terry Kuss & Matt Meyers (pictured below-far left) of Lake County Planning and Development said that they were impressed by the resumes they previewed of Workforce trainees. They were looking for people who were 'self-initiated' for special projects. They found that in these three trainees . . .

Cynthia (pictured center) worked on customer flow and public information for the department. She loves the investigative side of the work experience. Her extensive sales experience has allowed her to take a load off the front-end staff at the office.

Patrice (pictured right) completed customized courses in business analysis, project management and Agile. She is working on the permit fee structure and has devised a more simplified fee structure without negatively impacting revenue. She says the planning department project gave her practical experience in a different industry.



Cynthia, Patrice and Tom all focused on project management during their training. They put their skills to the test at the Lake County Planning Department in 2014

Tom (pictured far right) has completed three projects for the department including developing an FAQ (frequently asked questions) form and reviewing the training manuals. He brings his perspective as a former Senior Client Specialist for a large risk management firm.

When a company undergoes a layoff, Job Center staff can assist affected employees. Recently, a team of staff members assisted 39 individuals who had received layoff notices from a local company with resume preparation and online job registrations.



I would like to take this opportunity to tell you what a great team you have. Each of our employees who attended the sessions yesterday have very good resumes. Each member of your team was so very helpful, patient and kind. Thank you so much for helping our people to find jobs!

Jeanne Miteff, Human Resource Supervisor

Summer Youth Employment Program

171 Lake County youth were employed through the county-funded Summer Youth Employment Program this year. The youth were sent to 36 work sites throughout Lake County. They were paid \$8.25 per hour (25 hours per week) for the seven-week assignment. For most participants, the Summer Youth Employment program was their first job.



Three youth workers were placed at the North Chicago Public Library. Joan Battley, Library Director said the youth workers were a blessing because they "were able to help with certain work load projects that the staff had limited time to complete." She says the youth workers learned team work and decision making skills.



Gizelle (pictured left) walked every day to her summer job at the Zion Public library. She made library cards, discharged books, and learned to use a cash register. After the summer program ended, she was hired as a substitute worker at the library.

32 youth workers were placed with Zion Township. They performed tasks throughout the community including: trash pick up, yard work, recycling, delivering flyers, moving furniture, and helping vendors set up at a farmer's market. Gail Gloudemans, Assistant Township Supervisor, said that the program holds the youth to a "higher level of accountability . . . and gives them a better sense of community and what it takes to be a contributing member of society." She also pointed out that receiving a paycheck helps the participants to learn money management.



Work sites each nominated a "shining star" (a youth who performed an exceptional job during the summer program.

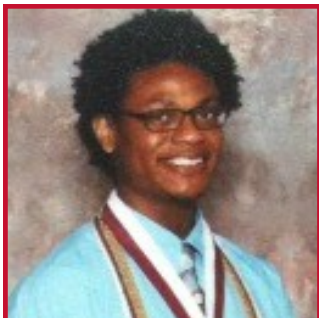
Pictured here are (from left to right): Shariana, Kara, Sebrían, Erik, Stephany, and Dylan.

Youth

Lake County Workforce Development funds a number of programs in local high schools to help young people complete and continue their education. The examples below are graduates of the **Jobs for Bees program** at Zion-Benton Township High School and the **Shine** program at Waukegan High School. These programs typically include tutoring, college visits and work experience or internships.

Andrea received a **Gates Millenium Scholarship**—a full scholarship through graduation—and will attend Stanford University in the fall. She is one of only 1000 recipients nationwide and is the first in her family to go to college.

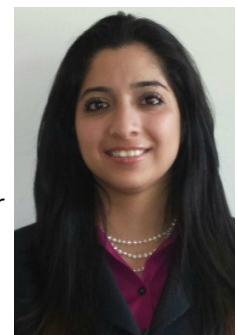
Andrea participated in the **Shine** program while she was a student at Waukegan High School and did her work experience at Habitat for Humanity Lake County. "My internship helped me to think of work in terms of not how much money I can make but on how much impact can I make on my community and that's what really made me happy."



James is currently a sophomore at the University of Iowa earning a degree in **Pre-med**. A former participant in the Jobs for Bees program at Zion-Benton Township High School, James credits the program for giving him the life and job experiences that will help him long after high school. James said the program "*gave me the guidance in my career selection and my college choice . . . I don't think I would have been able to make all those decisions without the help the program offers. There is no doubt that this program has helped put me on the right track towards a brighter future!*"

Lake County Workforce Development also assists recent high school graduates with grants to receive post secondary education.

Margarita, for example, completed medical office training at First Institute in May 2014 and was immediately hired as a **Dental Assistant**. She says the new job and training allowed her to make a big change in her life. She says she wants the best for her one year old son and dreams of owning a home soon. She maintained a 4.0 throughout her educational journey.



Ask the WIB

All Lake County Workforce Development programs operate under the oversight and strategic guidance of the Lake County Workforce Investment Board (WIB). Recently, we asked WIB member Emily Garrity about career transition strategies for veterans leaving military service and how employers can tap into this talent-rich

Finding a new career is an important part of the move from military to civilian life. What career planning tips do you have for veterans in transition?

Take time to take stock. Transitioning service members should pause to ask themselves: Is this really what I want to be doing? After living inside the military culture, self-assessment might seem uncomfortable, but it is critical to long-term career satisfaction.

Reach out to other veterans and service organizations: Take advantage of the resources available to you to make this transition a positive one!

Get started soon. The longer you wait after your discharge to get started, the harder it will be to get motivated. Learn about civilian careers that interest you, start building your network, and do some research on the civilian human resources (HR) process.

What's the best way for veterans to translate the work they have done in the military so that it makes sense to civilian employers?

Websites like the Veteran Jobs section on www.military.com can help you map your experience to civilian job titles and identify how your training and experience might make you a qualified candidate for similar civilian roles. If your military role doesn't translate to civilian life well, you may need to think critically about the transferrable skills that you acquired in the military. While you may have access to G.I. Bill funds to help with your education, the Job Center is also a great resource to help discuss training options as well as other financial resources that may be available.

How can employers make sure that their recruiting efforts are effective in reaching this unique and diverse talent pool?

Veteran recruitment is more important than ever. Aside from the fantastic skills and experience that our veterans bring with them to the workforce, new federal regulations under the Vietnam Era Veterans Readjustment Assistance Act (VEVRAA) are setting higher standards for recruitment and hiring of veterans for federal contractors and subcontractors. The critical element for any employer looking to recruit veterans is outreach specific to them. Are your recruiting materials and job postings written to be inclusive? What channels are you using to find candidates? Identify the veterans within your organization and ask them to help in recruiting, onboarding and retaining veteran talent. Remember also that employers have an obligation to support those who serve in our military as reservists and members of the National Guard. Prospective employees will respect a strong commitment to service members of all types.



Emily Garrity is the Co-Founder and President of ConnectVETS.org a nonprofit organization dedicated to transitioning today's military to tomorrow's workforce by connecting U.S. military service members and veterans to private sector employment opportunities. She is a Marine mom, Army wife, Army daughter, Army sister and Army niece. She is a member of National Louis University's Veterans Advisory Board, the Employment & Training and Education working groups of the Illinois Joining Forces Initiative, and co-chair of the Small Business Advocacy Council's Veterans Committee.

www.connectvets.org

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An equal opportunity program/ employer. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to persons with disabilities.

Congratulations to **Darlene** who was hired as an **IT Coordinator/ Executive**

Administrative Assistant in July 2014. Darlene put in over 150 volunteer hours during the past two years in the Job Center while she looked for work.



Workforce volunteers help jobseekers prepare resumes and conduct computerized job search. For more information about the volunteer group, call the Job Center at 847.377.3450 or email elocke@lakecountyil.gov

Revised Resume Makes the Difference



Rosie was a project manager for a hospital supply company for more than 7 years. When she lost her job in 2013, she wiped out her retirement savings trying to stay afloat. Although she had a bachelor degree and multiple accreditations, she had sent out thousands of resumes without a single reply. *"I was preparing to become homeless."* In desperation, she contacted her state senator's office and was referred to the Job Center of Lake County.

A staff member from the Job Center met with Rosie and helped her redesign her resume to feature her most relevant skills. The staff person helped her add information to make her stand out including awards and certificates. *"I sent out two resumes after that and got a phone call immediately."* She was hired as a **Manufacturing Engineer** in May 2014. She says the job couldn't have come at a better time.

Rosie tells other jobseekers to never give up and to use every resource. *"I didn't know how important a resume was. I wish I had visited the Job Center earlier."*